

## **Commissioner Paul Smith responds to criticism that he is anti-women**

October 24, 2014

During the last week three fliers have been mailed to thousands of homes in Frederick, all criticizing me for having regressive views on women. On October 16<sup>th</sup>, the first attack piece was mailed to Frederick residents, criticizing me for (1) cutting funding to Head Start, (2) stating that “Mothers should be home with small children,” and (3) “saying women do not belong in the workplace.” This campaign attack ad was sent by the Maryland House Democratic Committee Slate, in an effort to persuade voters to vote against me in my bid for election to another office.

Part of this flier is totally false, part is true, and part is an incomplete quote which misrepresents what I said.

The false part is the first piece is that it writes that I said “women do not belong in the workplace.” I never said this. This is a blatant misrepresentation of my statements and my views. The BOCC on which I served has elevated more women to major positions of leadership than any other BOCC ever. We appointed Lori Depies to be the County Manager. We appointed Erin White as Acting Director of Finance. We appointed Denise Pouget to be the Director of Fire and Rescue Services. These positions were all previously held by men. In addition, Dr. Barbara Brookmyer, Pat Rosensteel and Sherry Weakley each head other county divisions. These women all do excellent work; they are a tremendous benefit to the County, and we are fortunate to have their services.

The true part of the first flier is that in 2011 I voted with a majority of the BOCC to transfer the Head Start program to a non-profit entity. This saved the County over \$1 million a year, with no cut in services to families who place their children in the Head Start program. The Head Start program was transferred to the YMCA, who now operates the program. Before the BOCC transferred the Head Start program to a non-profit organization, Frederick County was the only county in Maryland operating a Head Start program.

The incomplete quote in the first flier came from a statement I made at another place and time. Contrary to what the hit piece states, the statement was not made at a BOCC meeting. Go ahead and check it out; you’ll see. However, when questioned by a reporter from The Washington Post, I did state the following: “I feel that wherever possible, mothers should be at home with small children.” The Democrat campaign piece omitted the introductory qualifier in order to attempt to make a stronger, more negative hit on me. I do believe that caring for the needs of our little children is the most important duty of society, and I believe that it is the primary duty of both parents to attend to this, and that it is best for the children, especially the small children, when the parents care for them in their homes. I believe that it is the divine role and capacity of mothers to nurture and care for their small children whenever that is possible; and I do believe that mothers should be home with their small children “wherever possible.”

The other two fliers make similar accusations against me, which are also misrepresentations.

These three fliers portray me as being anti-women and lacking in understanding of women. This is a gross misrepresentation. As an attorney for over 35 years, I have represented hundreds of women, including dozens of single-parent women with young children. I have represented many of them on a pro bono or reduced fee basis, to help them deal with very difficult financial, marital and children issues. There are few people who truly understand the issues of single-parents as well as I do. But I would also note that of all the mothers I have represented over the last 35 years, I do not recall one mother who would not have preferred to be home with her small children if at all possible.

Finally, for any who think that I harbor negative or inferior feelings of any sort towards women, I would suggest that you may wish to contact the women who have worked with me closely for many years, to get their feedback on me and on the misrepresentations of the attack fliers. My wife of 41 years and my two daughters are furious about these mailers. Similarly, I believe the many women with whom I have associated professionally for many years would have positive things to say about my regard for and treatment of women.